

REMARKS

Claims 2-29 are pending in the action. Claims 2-5, 10, 19, 23, 26, 27 and 29 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 6, 11 and 20 have been amended to independent form. No new claims have been added.

The Office Action rejects claims 4, 5, and 23 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fulkerson in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,647,583 to Emigh et al ("Emigh"). The Applicant respectfully disagrees and traverses this rejection. However, to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicant has cancelled these claims without prejudice and intends to present these claims in a continuation application. As these claims have been cancelled, this rejection is moot.

The Office rejects claims 10, 19 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,246,461 to Hinsburg in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,693,718 to Takoaka. The Applicant respectfully disagrees and traverses this rejection. However, to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicant has cancelled these claims without prejudice and intends to present these claims in a continuation application. As these claims have been cancelled, this rejection is moot.

The Office rejects claims 27, 29, 2 and 3 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Fulkerson in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,425,478 to Eberle. The Applicant respectfully disagrees and traverses the rejection. However, to expedite prosecution of this application, Applicant has cancelled these claims without prejudice and intends to present these claims in a continuation application. As these claims have been cancelled, this rejection is moot.

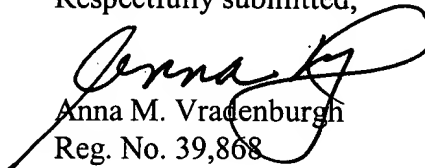
The Examiner states that claims 7-9, 12-18, 21, 22, 24, 25 and 28 are allowable, and further states that claims 6, 11 and 20 are objected as being dependent upon a rejected claim base, but are allowable if re-written in independent form. The Applicant thanks the Examiner. The Applicant has re-written claims 6, 11 and 20 as the Applicant believes that these claims are currently allowable in light of the arguments set forth above.

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The Applicant believes that the claims are in condition for allowance. As such, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Office withdraw the rejections and pass the claims onto allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Anna M. Vradenburgh
Reg. No. 39,868

AMV/em